

FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION'S
LAWYER OF THE YEAR

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 1995

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, December 4, it was my great privilege and pleasure, on behalf of the Federal Bar Association's Transportation Section, to present the "Lawyer of the Year Award" to David A. Heymsfeld, Democratic Staff Director, for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I would like to take this opportunity simply to restate my remarks at that very special occasion:

David Heymsfeld's exquisite legislative craftsmanship has defined and given direction to an entire generation of aviation law. His 20 years of service on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; his keen eye for detail; his zest for and command of the broad policy issues of aviation law; his respect for the opinions and concerns of others, and his exceptional ability to meld them into a cohesive whole have left an indelible, constructive imprint on the complete body of aviation law just prior to and since enactment of the watershed Aviation Deregulation Act of 1978.

David has been plying his legislative craftsmanship for so long that Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña was probably still in law school when David joined our committee staff.

David's immersion in aviation law began during his service at the Civil Aeronautics Board with the "father" of aviation deregulation, Chairman Alfred Kahn—but, I think it is fair to say that David has had a more enduring impact on aviation law than Chairman Kahn since then.

His Senate staff counterparts, over the years, have gone on to other pursuits: Phil Bakes to Texas Air; Will Ris to American Airlines; and one, Steven Breyer, made it to the Supreme Court.

Many of his colleagues in the field of aviation law have made important contributions over the years, but David Heymsfeld stands alone, astride the entire compendium of law and regulation in the field of aviation. Every day practitioners of the art and science of aviation law diligently analyze, report on, and make marketplace decisions based upon statutes and their accompanying reports that David Heymsfeld has crafted—and they will do so for generations to come.

David's great gift is his openness, his willingness to work with all segments of the aviation sector, both public and private, and to work collaboratively with his colleagues in both the House and Senate on a truly open, bipartisan basis.

Mr. Heymsfeld received his BA from Columbia College in 1959 and an LLD from Harvard Law School in 1962.

It is now my great pleasure to present the award, which reads: "Transportation Lawyer of the Year Award" to David A. Heymsfeld, Minority Staff Director, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Monday, December 4, 1995.

Congratulations, David, this is an honor richly deserved and truly earned.

LEGISLATION TO HELP LOWER
THE BURDEN OF MEDICARE
PART A BUY-INS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 1995

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, Representative ROBERT MATSUI and I are today introducing a bill to help those who, through no fault of their own, were not able to participate in the Medicare Program during their working years and now face over \$3,000 a year in Medicare part A buy-in costs.

Our bill lowers the cost of the monthly part A buy-in for about 216,000 people over age 80 who, for no fault of their own, could not participate in Medicare during their working years, because their employers were not in Social Security. The people in this group are mostly retired teachers, policemen, and firemen over age 80 who worked for State and local governments which elected not to join the Medicare payroll tax system.

These retirees have been stuck in increasingly expensive small public or private insurance policies, and many of them have had to drop insurance coverage because they could no longer afford it on their shrinking pensions. Since most of them could not afford to maintain private insurance, even if it were available, they have been buying into Medicare part A, some for as long as 15 years. The Medicare buy-in monthly premium is set to equal the full actuarial cost of part A, and today premiums are more than \$250 a month and now many of these retirees cannot afford to buy into this basic level of Medicare hospital protection. Many are becoming uninsured—and uninsurable—at the most vulnerable period in their lives.

In the last Congress, Representative BILL THOMAS and I developed an amendment to help this population by lowering the part A buy-in for those who achieved 30 quarters of coverage but not the necessary 40 required for Medicare eligibility.

This has been a help to a few of these retirees, but many of the poorest of these seniors, of course, do not have even 30 quarters of coverage and desperately need help.

Therefore, the amendment Representative MATSUI and I are introducing today would lower the cost of the monthly buy-in by about \$150 a month. Individuals would still have to contribute \$100 per month—and the full actuarial rate for years before their 80th birthday.

Our bill does not include a way to pay for this change, but we expect to be able to offer a funding proposal at such time as the legislation is considered for markup.

I hope other Members will join us in supporting this much needed relief to a group of our older retirees who—to repeat—through no fault of their own, were unable to participate in the regular Medicare Program during their working years.

HONORING TONY M. ASTORGA

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 1995

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a longtime friend and supporter,

Mr. Tony M. Astorga, on the occasion of his 50th birthday. It is my pleasure to recognize the achievements of Mr. Astorga, and the impact he has had on the people of Arizona.

Mr. Astorga has long been a valuable member of the Arizona community, beginning with his days as a student at Arizona State University. During his time at ASU, he received many honors, including his placement in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities," and "Outstanding Young Men of America." He graduated from ASU with a B.S. degree in accounting with high honors, leading to a long and distinguished career in the Arizona business community.

Currently, Mr. Astorga is the senior vice president, chief financial officer and treasurer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Arizona and president of AT International, Inc. He has been named the "Professional of the Year" by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and received the "Public Service Award" from the Arizona Society of Certified Public Accountants. However, the demands of a highly successful professional career have not kept him from making an impact on the community. He has been a part of the United Way Agency Review Panel, the Blessed Sacrament and St. Joan of Arc Finance Committees, as well as participating in the Manpower Advisory Council and Citizens Task Force to the city of Phoenix.

I take great pleasure in recognizing the efforts and contributions that Mr. Astorga has made during his lifetime in Phoenix, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of Mr. Tony Astorga.

CAPITALIZING ON AMTRAK

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 1995

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill to establish a new intercity passenger rail trust fund. Serving over 500 destinations across the country, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation [Amtrak] provides 22 million passenger rail trips to Americans every year. With an estimated \$4 billion needed in capital improvements over the next few years, the rail trust fund will provide Amtrak with much needed capital funds to improve rolling stock, cars and locomotives, upgrade maintenance facilities, and prevent the deterioration of track and signal equipment. First introduced by Senate Finance Committee Chairman BILL ROTH, the rail trust fund will be a secure source of capital funding during this time of tight budgetary constraints.

On October 1, the 2.5 cents of the existing 18-cents-per-gallon gas tax that had been going into the Treasury for deficit reduction was shifted back into the mass transit portion of the highway trust fund. This highway trust fund account has a huge balance—estimated at over \$10 billion at the end of fiscal 1996. My bill would direct 0.5 cent of this 2.5 cents into the rail trust fund until September 30, 2000.

The establishment of this rail trust fund will not adversely affect other modes of transport, including mass transit. In fact, special language has been included in the rail trust fund legislation protecting mass transit. If, under the